Australian Bureau of Statistics

6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 2001

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3.8 Million people not in the labour force

There were 3.8 million people aged 15 to 69 who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed, nor unemployed) in September 2001, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This represents an increase of just over 2% on the September 2000 figure.

These 3.8 million people made up 28% of Australia's civilian population aged 15-69 years, with females accounting for two-thirds of people not in the labour force, a proportion which has remained steady over recent years.

The number of people with marginal attachment (*) to the labour force fell to 816,500, a decrease of 1% since September 2000. This follows a 7% decrease in the previous twelve month period. Some 23% of females and 20% of males not in the labour force had a marginal attachment to the labour force.

Findings on people with marginal attachment to the labour force include:

- 751,100 people wanted to work and were not actively looking for work, but were available to start work within four weeks;
- 65,400 people wanted to work and were actively looking for work, but were not available to start in the survey reference week;
- 66% of females and 44% of males would have preferred part-time work;
- 19% of females and 41% of males would have preferred full-time work;
- 15% of both females and males had no preference for either full-time or part-time work, or were undecided;
- For males the most common reasons for not actively looking for work were "attending an educational institution" (30%) and "own ill health or physical disability" (17%); and
- The most common reasons for not actively looking for work for females were "childcare" (29%) and "attending an educational institution" (13%).

Over three-quarters (78%) of the 3.8 million people not in the labour force were without marginal attachment to the labour force. This proportion was unchanged from September 2000. Of these, 313,700 people wanted to work but were neither actively looking nor available to start within four weeks.

Further details can be found in the publication **Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2001** (cat. no. 6220.0).

(*) Media Note: People are defined as marginally attached to the labour force if they want to

work, are not actively looking for work, but are available to start work within four weeks; or they want to work, and are actively looking for work, but are not available to start in the survey reference week.

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